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**DEVICE FOR OPERATING DISCHARGE LAMPS
BY MEANS OF A TRANSFORMER WITH FOUR
WINDINGS, AND A CORRESPONDING METHOD**

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Field of the invention

10 The present invention relates to a device for operating
at least two discharge lamps. Moreover, the present
invention relates to a corresponding method for
operating two discharge lamps. In particular, the
present invention relates to electronic ballasts in
15 which such a device is integrated. Operating discharge
lamps comprises in this case both their starting and
their being alight.

Background of the invention

20 It is known to operate two discharge lamps with two
load circuits. In this case, the term load circuit
refers to the load of a bridge that is used as an
inverter to operate a discharge lamp. Each load circuit
has a dedicated preheating arrangement for the
25 respective lamp. Furthermore, according to the internal
prior art, it is possible to operate two lamps in one
load circuit. Here, the primary coil of a heating
transformer of a series circuit of two lamps is
connected in parallel and the secondary coil of the
30 heating transformer is connected between the two lamps.
Furthermore, it is possible to heat all the filaments
of the lamps by transformer via secondary windings, the
primary winding being situated in a section of the
bridge suitable for the application.

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It is relatively complicated to implement the load
circuits in terms of circuitry, since electronic
control circuits with relay or transistor switches are
required for a defined, sequential starting and